

Housing and Infrastructure Board

15 March 2022

South Yorkshire Digital Infrastructure Strategy Delivery Plan

Is the paper exempt from the press and public?	No
<i>Reason why exempt:</i>	Not applicable
Purpose of this report:	Policy Decision
Is this a Key Decision?	Yes
Has it been included on the Forward Plan?	Yes

Director Approving Submission of the Report:

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Executive Summary

To consider and approve the final draft South Yorkshire Digital Infrastructure Strategy Delivery Plan.

What does this mean for businesses, people and places in South Yorkshire?

The implementation of the Strategy aims to help improve business productivity, competitiveness, digital exclusion, digital poverty and to make South Yorkshire more attractive to inward investors as a digitally enabled place to live and work.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to:

- Consider and approve the Delivery Plan to take forward implementation of the South Yorkshire Digital Infrastructure Strategy.

Consideration by any other Board, Committee, Assurance or Advisory Panel

Superfast South Yorkshire Board

14 February 2022

1. Background

- 1.1 The South Yorkshire Digital Infrastructure Strategy was approved by the Mayoral Combined Authority on the 20th September 2021 and it was requested that the Housing and Infrastructure Board prepare a Delivery Plan for implementation of the Strategy.
- 1.2 Taking into account feedback from members of both Boards, a final draft Delivery Plan is presented in Appendix A for the Board's consideration and approval.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Implementing the Strategy

The final draft Delivery Plan recognises the importance of a joined-up approach to deliver the SEP ambitions for the digital agenda, including digital infrastructure, skills, innovation and business support. It also acknowledges the vital role of partnership working across the public and private sectors in order to secure effective implementation of the Digital Infrastructure Strategy.

- 2.2 The Delivery Plan sets out realistic and deliverable actions and interventions to implement the Digital Infrastructure Strategy, including priorities that are strategically important and/or need to be delivered in the short-term (next two years), as well as actions which could be undertaken in the medium term.
- 2.3 To ensure successful implementation of the Strategy the necessary resources will need to be secured. The existing Superfast South Yorkshire executive team will transition to focus on delivery of the Strategy, and 'clawback' funding from the Superfast South Yorkshire programme that is being returned to SYMCA will provide a significant funding source over the next 5 years to support implementation. This includes implementation of the wider digital agenda, including activities related to the digital skills and digital innovation and business support agendas.
- 2.4 Funding to support the implementation of the Delivery Plan's actions, including supporting the existing executive team, is included within the MCA 2022/23 Business Plan and budget.
- 2.5 **Project Gigabit Update**
The Project Gigabit programme is a key programme to help fill 'gaps' in gigabit capable digital infrastructure coverage across South Yorkshire, as reflected in the Delivery Plan. In July 2021 Government announced that between £61m and £103m funding had been allocated to South Yorkshire through Project Gigabit, to provide gigabit capable digital infrastructure and connectivity which the 'Market' would otherwise not be providing over the next 5 years (estimated to be up to 56,800 premises).
- 2.6 An initial pre-procurement stage to undertake an Open Market Review (OMR), was launched in South Yorkshire on 4th February 2022. The OMR is used to consult the digital infrastructure telecom providers to understand their existing and future build plans, which provides the data to define the Intervention Area where Project Gigabit

funding can be targeted. This is therefore critically important and a necessary initial stage in developing the Project Gigabit programme in South Yorkshire.

- 2.7 This will provide significant support to improve Gigabit capable coverage and reduce digital poverty within South Yorkshire. Procurement of a provider (led by Department of Communities, Media and Sport and supported by the Superfast South Yorkshire executive team) is due to begin in November 2022, with roll-out expected from late 2023. Further progress updates will be provided at future meetings.

3. Options Considered and Recommended Proposal

3.1 Option 1

To support and approve the final draft Delivery Plan.

3.2 Option 1 Risks and Mitigations

- A key risk with this Option would occur if partners are unable to commit to implementing the Strategy. However, the existing Superfast South Yorkshire (SFSY) Board, which comprises representatives from the MCA and the four South Yorkshire authorities have helped develop both the Strategy and this Delivery Plan and are committed to their implementation.
- A further risk would occur if there was insufficient public and private investment to implement the Strategy in a timely manner to meet the delivery targets of the Strategy. Superfast South Yorkshire Clawback funding is providing a public funding source to support implementation of both the Strategy and the wider digital agenda, as well as a refocused SFSY executive team. The MCA Executive and local authorities continue to liaise with and support digital infrastructure providers in delivering their roll-out plans

3.3 Option 2

Not to approve the Delivery Plan.

3.4 Option 2 Risks and Mitigations

The key risk with this option is that it may delay the implementation of the Strategy and thus the ability to address the digital infrastructure challenges and SEP digital ambitions.

3.5 Recommended Option

Option 1

4. Consultation on Proposal

- 4.1 The Delivery Plan has been developed in liaison with SYMCA Executive leads for skills, innovation and business support, with the Superfast South Yorkshire Board acting as an Advisory Group at key stages, with the Housing and Infrastructure Board overseeing production and implementation of the Strategy and Delivery Plan.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 Following approval of the Delivery Plan work will commence to establish a detailed profile for implementation. Progress on implementation will be reported to future meetings of this Board.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice

- 6.1 Superfast South Yorkshire (SFSY) Clawback funding provides a capital resource for implementation of many of the actions set out in the final draft Delivery Plan, including funding for the existing SFSY executive team. The MCA determines how this funding is allocated with the initial 12 months funding requirements being included within the MCA's 2022/23 Business Plan and Budget.
- 6.2 However, not all the actions in the final draft Delivery Plan can be funded from capital funding, therefore some actions may require revenue from alternative sources. The MCA Executive and local partners will collectively explore options for funding these activities.

7. Legal Implications and Advice

- 7.1 There are no direct legal issues arising from this report.

8. Human Resources Implications and Advice

- 8.1 The existing Superfast South Yorkshire (SFSY) executive team will be refocused to support implementation of the Delivery Plan's actions, funded through SFSY clawback funding.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice

- 9.1 Ensuring digital inclusion for all is a key purpose of the Digital Infrastructure Strategy, aligning with the intentions of the Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty and the inclusivity policy approach of the Strategic Economic Plan.

10. Climate Change Implications and Advice

- 10.1 The Covid19 lockdown periods have shown the importance of good digital connectivity, particularly in relation to enabling people to effectively work from home and access both public health and other services online. Improved digital infrastructure / connectivity could be an important contributor to meeting net zero reduction targets related to transport.

11. Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice

- 11.1 There are no IT issues as a direct result of this report.

12. Communications and Marketing Implications and Advice. Please also refer to consultation undertaken as per Section 4

- 12.1 There may be media opportunities related to the successful implementation of the various actions within the draft final Delivery Plan.

List of Appendices Included

- A Draft Final Digital Infrastructure Strategy Delivery Plan

Background Papers

None